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THE HISTORY OF
THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA
1854 - 1964

by
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A hundred years ago in Charlottetown our forefathers held deliberations which led to Confederation. The decisions and agreements of 1864 led to one of the truly great exercises in nation-building and the work of the Fathers deserves far more respect, commendation and gratitude than we, in our undemonstrative way, usually accord.

One of the leading men at Charlottetown was John A. Macdonald of Canada West. He is justly renowned in history as the Father of his country and his exertions for Confederation merit warmest praise. But Macdonald himself declared that his greatest work was done before Confederation. It is to that area that I invite your attention as I commence the lecture. Before building a united Canada John A built a party. Without the latter it is doubtful if the former could have been created.

Political parties are necessary to democracy. As Lord Bryce said: "Political parties are far older than democracy. No free large country has been without them. No one has shown how a representative government could be worked without them."

In a country so diverse as Canada it is essential that political parties be broadly based in the geographic, occupational, ethnic and ideational sense. Macdonald never spent much time in philosophizing. Indeed when he first sought office in Kingston in 1844, he expressed the belief that:

"In a young country like Canada, I am of the opinion that it is of more consequence to endeavour to develop its resources and improve its physical advantages than to waste the time of the legislature and the money of the people in fruitless discussions on abstract and theoretical questions of government."

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Macdonald was a pragmatic, perceptive politician who saw the needs of the times in which he lived. Happily, he also had the charm, finesse and leadership to accomplish his goals.

Ten years before the Charlottetown Conference and ten years after his first election, the 39-year-old Macdonald was piecing together a political party which would in large measure be the vehicle to carry British North America onto the broad highway of Confederation. He realized that compromise and merger of some of the numerous political groupings was essential. He also realized that no narrow or doctrinaire appeal would rally men of such disparate backgrounds as the leading politicians in the Canada of the 1850s. As he wrote to a friend in February 1854:

"Our aim should be to enlarge the bounds of the Party so as to embrace every person desirous of being counted as a Progressive Conservative."

(In 1942 we got back to our founder's expression although there were some who were filled with the gravest anxiety at the adoption of such a name for our Party).

Macdonald in 1854 did succeed in bringing together all but a few extremists in the legislature. He was able to persuade Reformers to serve in a ministry with Tories. Such a happy coalition would not have been achieved had not Macdonald, always a moderate, been successful in influencing a great portion of his own colleagues away from some of their antiquated and extreme attitudes.

The Liberal-Conservative group (it was some years before it could be called a "Party") applied itself to the solution of important problems facing Canada - land tenure, education, the form of the legislature - were among the questions they dealt with successfully and expeditiously.

Mrs. Roy Henderson
Alberta Women's P.C.
President

THE CONSERVATIVE WOMEN'S CENTENNIAL PROJECT

Inasmuch as the "Story of Canada" is also the story of the Conservative Party, our members wish to be ready to celebrate 1967 in a manner fitting and commensurate with the great role the Conservative Party has played during these historic "one hundred years" regarding the birth, the growth and the development of Canada.

All Conservative Women in each province are reaching out and beyond their provincial borders in our centennial project.

Our Centennial Project, therefore, is the establishment at National Conservative Headquarters in Ottawa, of the "MACDONALD-CARTIER LIBRARY":

1. to preserve the historical material which has accumulated regarding the Story of Canada at the headquarters;
2. to collect the material which will continue to accumulate at the Head Office of a great National Political Party and...
3. to catalogue the material so it can be readily used for research and political purposes

Such a library, in the years to come, will be indispensable to students of political research, to students of history, to our Senators, to our Members of Parliament, to our Candidates, to our political workers, in fact to everyone.

A memorial book recording the names of all contributors will be compiled and bound in a permanent leather cover and given a place of prominence in the library. This memoir in itself will constitute a valuable historical record of the names of Conservative Women living in Canada in 1964, 1965, and 1966. It will be a living memorial to the Conservative Women of this time. So that no one will visit the library in the future, look at the book and say, "Here I am, a Conservative Woman, and my name isn't there" you are given this opportunity to send your dollar and your name, exactly as you wish it recorded, to Mrs. Roy Henderson, Box 820, High River, Alberta or to the President of your association in your area.

An "In Memorium" page will also be included in the record book, so, if your mother or grandmother or both were staunch Conservatives, perhaps you would like to have their names recorded as well. The donation here can be whatever you wish to give.

We know that the MACDONALD-CARTIER LIBRARY will be exceedingly rich in Canadian Political historical material thus we will be saving - CREATING - if you prefer, Canadian Culture. As Mrs. D.H. Harrison Smith, National President of the Progressive Conservative Women of Canada says, "Let other Political parties deplore the image of Canada and Canadians, as Mr. Pearson, Prime Minister does in saying 'we are suffering from a kind of schizophrenia' but while the others are wasting time speaking of trivea, the Progressive Conservative Women of Canada will be off along the highways and byways of this vast country building Canadian Culture by preparing to preserve 'The Story of Canada'".

Like Macdonald himself, the Liberal-Conservatives were a moderate, practical, middle-of-the-road association of politicians. The sine qua non of political success was an accommodation between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians, and the alliance of Macdonald and Georges-Etienne Cartier proved to be one of the most significant of political associations.

It was the great gift of Macdonald that he was able to harness the energies of the leading men in Old Canada and later draw to his side vigorous and able men such as Charles Tupper in Nova Scotia, Samuel Tilley in New Brunswick, and the leaders in other parts of the Dominion who supported Confederation. It was the genius of the man that ^{he} was able to integrate the efforts of men who differed on many subjects, but who agreed that the building of a nation was the most important issue of their day. Even the irascible George Brown, to his credit, joined forces with Macdonald in bringing about Confederation. D'Arcy McGee, the eloquent leader of the Irish Catholics, was a prominent figure in the Party who remained constant to his chief and to his vision of a united Dominion until the day of his untimely death.

It might be said that Macdonald was twice the founder of a party, because it was no mean feat to bring together political leaders of the Maritimes and of Canada whose relations before the Confederation discussions had been characterized by indifference, misunderstanding or downright hostility.

After the endless negotiations and innumerable compromises had brought Confederation into being, the Liberal-Conservative Party took over the helm and held control (except in 1874-78) for a generation. The characteristics which had distinguished it in pre-Confederation days remained, though the difficulties and challenges were all on a bigger scale. The new nation had to

be tied together, and the Liberal-Conservatives did not hesitate to use the full power of the state and the Party to accomplish the building of the transcontinental railway. Nationalism was a powerful motivation for the new group, and the opening up of the West and the extension of the nation a mari usque ad mare was its great accomplishment.

In these days of excessive provincialism it might be well to recall Macdonald's view of the nation of which he had been chief architect:

"We have strengthened the General Government. We have given the General Legislature all the great subjects of legislation. We have conferred on them, not only specifically and in detail, all the powers which are incident to sovereignty, but we have expressly declared that all subjects of general interest not distinctly and exclusively conferred upon the local governments and local legislatures, shall be conferred upon the General Government and Legislature.....This is precisely the provision which is wanting in the Constitution of the American system - the point where the American Constitution breaks down. It is in itself a wise and necessary provision. We thereby strengthen the Central Parliament and make the Confederation one people and one government, instead of five peoples and five governments, with merely a point of authority connecting us to a limited and insufficient extent."

Even a Party which had such an achievement as that of the Liberal-Conservatives in bringing about Confederation was not invulnerable. The powerful Party of Macdonald went down to defeat and temporarily to something akin to disgrace. The years 1873-1878 were lean years for the Party but more important, they were lean years for the new Dominion. The dour honesty, sobriety of the colorless Mackenzie was not enough to rally and inspire the young country. There was no verve, no elan, no courageous assault on the problems besetting the body politic. Indeed he failed to create a national party or bind together the few able men who were of his political persuasion.

"The party and the government in consequence remained less than the sum of their members and were weakened, not strengthened, by the possession of office."

There was a lack of leadership which soon brought about the forced evacuation of the Party from office. Ideas are important, good men are essential, but a Party must accomplish things together. The Liberals under Mackenzie failed in this test. As Laurier said: "Our administration is too tame....all the excitement comes from its blunders."

While the Pacific Scandal was somewhat disturbing even to the electorate of the 1870s which was much less fastidious than that of our day, Macdonald's cry that "these hands are clean" was eventually convincing. After lying low for two years, he and his opposition group started on the road back to power. They did not rely on governmental ineptitude or upon the depression which had engulfed the land. Instead they enunciated the "National Policy" - a program of industrial and commercial expansion, aided by government action, designed to create a viable economy which would be an expression of growing economic nationalism. "If not reciprocity in trade, let us have reciprocity in tariffs" said the Liberal-Conservatives as they viewed the Grit failures to win reciprocal trade agreements from the United States. The country must and would be tied together by railways. Macdonald's promise to "make the tall chimneys smoke" was heeded by a population tired of the lack-lustre Grits.

Back in office the Liberal-Conservatives pursued their policies of national development. The country was bound together in a physical sense by the CPR constructed with massive government aid (fidelity to the temple of unfettered private enterprise seemed not to deter those Conservatives of that day!) The Arctic Islands were taken over from the British and a major effort made to people the West and construct a truly transcontinental Dominion.

Through election after election - 1878, 1882, 1887 - Macdonald triumphed. There were great problems, some of which threatened the existence of the Dominion itself. Religious and sectional bitterness was fired by the execution of Louis Riel after his excesses in two uprisings against the authority of the Dominion. Macdonald who had always drawn great support from French Canada saw his strength there diminish and the danger of a cleavage on racial lines faced him and the nation. The peril in such a situation was made clear by one of his able lieutenants, John Thompson, who said:

"The one calamity above all others which stands before this country is that political divisions should follow the division of race or the division of religion. The one danger which menaces the future of this country and the union of this country, now so happily being accomplished, is that men should stand arrayed against each other on the question of government, because they differ with regard to religion, because they differ with regard to race."

But in these days the dangers to Canada's independence from without were more real than they are today. Macdonald's final election was fought on strongly nationalist grounds and in fervent opposition to the Liberal-sponsored policy of unrestricted reciprocity with the United States. In 1891 the old warrior fought to preserve the nation, not from the disruptive forces within it but from what he regarded as the potentially destructive external economic forces which he feared would overwhelm the Dominion he and his associates had, with such difficult exertions, kept together through its painful early years.

Macdonald was not the greatest orator of his day, but his statement on the 1891 issue of unrestricted reciprocity was as eloquent as any ever uttered by a Canadian statesman.

"The question (he told the electors) which you will shortly be called upon to determine resolves itself into this: Shall we endanger our possession of the great heritage bequeathed to us by our Fathers, and submit ourselves to direct taxation for the privilege of having our tariff fixed at Washington, with the prospect of ultimately becoming a portion of the American Union?.....As for myself, my course is clear. A British Subject I was born - a British Subject I will die. With my utmost effort, with my last breath will I oppose the "veiled treason" which attempts by sordid means and mercenary proffers to lure our people from their allegiance."

With the slogan "the old flag, the old policy, the old leader", the Conservatives did win the 1891 election. (Incidentally the "old flag" was not the Union Jack but the Red Ensign).

But the founder of the Party was soon lost to them. Exhausted after the rigors of a winter campaign and the exertions of a lifetime in the rough and ready politics of his era, John A died in June 1891. It is significant that in the House of Commons the tributes to his greatness came from men of French Canada - Laurier and Langevin.

Probably no man in our public life made such an impact as Macdonald nor was any so colorful.

Many are the legends of the gay John A, many the stories told by and about him. Truly he had both the art and science of politics at his fingertips. He was the reconciler of the irreconcilable - the compromising genius of the age. Some hated him, but most who knew him loved him, and much of the secret of his success stemmed from the ties of affection which bound politicians and public to this man, who was as human in his failings as in his virtues.

How prophetic the man who at a Montreal meeting interrupted Macdonald's reference to a period after his death by shouting, "John A, you'll never die."

As Professor Creighton reminds us, "They had told him in England that his country could not be called a kingdom, but perhaps he had beaten them in the end by making himself a king."

But it is not the personality of Macdonald which interests us most. Rather are we more concerned with the policies he espoused and the Party he created. During Macdonald's time the basic cornerstones of Canadian Conservatism were laid.

Among these must be listed:

1. A pragmatism based on middle-of-the-road, practical policies of economic development.
2. Nationalism -- a determination to have a Canadian society neither subsumed by Americanism nor absorbed in an Imperial Federation. Macdonald stood against both imperialists and annexationists. What he sought to preserve was a Canadian state, monarchical in form, but with political institutions reflecting the problems of the new world.
3. Moderation based on a recognition of the rights of all minorities and the co-operative participation of French-speaking Canadians and English-speaking Canadians in the national institutions. The relationship of Cartier and Macdonald was symbolic of the kind of Party which this country must always have at the seat of power.
4. A strong Dominion Government. Had the Liberals of Macdonald's day had their way, the Dominion would have had very little power left in its sphere of jurisdiction. It would have been ill-prepared for the great national exertions it was to be called upon to make in the twentieth century.

After the old chieftain had gone, the Party fell on evil days --- corruption even too strong for that somewhat casual age, sectarianism fanned by extremists, and old age, the killer of many governments --- brought the long reign of Conservatism to an end.

In rapid succession Senator John Abbott, Sir John Thompson, Sir Mackenzie Bowell and Sir Charles Tupper held the Prime-Ministership.

Of these, and I am not being chauvinistic, Thompson and Tupper were the ablest. Indeed, except for his untimely death at the age of fifty, Thompson might have led his Party and the country through the difficult days of the Manitoba School controversy. But this was not to be. Bowell, a mediocre man, had one moment of greatness when, despite his high office in the Orange Order, he moved to bring remedial justice to the Roman Catholics of Manitoba. Old Tupper, the Cumberland War Horse, like many able, aggressive men, had enemies among the less able and he was called in too late to do other than preside over the collapse of the Liberal-Conservative edifice.

A partial explanation for the defeat of 1896 lies in the personality and ability of Wilfrid Laurier, the Liberal Leader. This brilliant charming son of Quebec was able to unify and excite his followers and blend them into a truly national party, as Macdonald had done earlier.

In the years following 1896, Laurier and Liberalism went from triumph to triumph. The land was prosperous, the national mood optimistic. John A. had built one railway, the Liberals would outdo him and build two.

The elections of 1900, 1904, 1908 brought massive Liberal victories. Quebec, once the stronghold of Conservatism, gave huge majorities to Laurier and his Party. The Conservatives, under Robert Borden, the Leader they had chosen in 1901, had difficulty making headway against the Laurier forces. But Borden, who entered politics reluctantly and, as he thought, for a short time only, fought off the discouragement which competition with the popular Laurier might have induced. Methodically he worked
to

maintain the Party's organization in those areas where it was strong. He established rapport with those provincial leaders who were scoring victories as the Liberal tide began to recede in the provincial areas. He succeeded in draining the best from his successors and gradually built up a platform which was reasonable, forward-looking and sound. A man of utmost probity, he won respect in a day when controverted elections were almost as numerous as those mundane ones which were finished on election day.

Yet it is doubtful if Robert Borden would ever have become Prime Minister had it not been for the reciprocity issue presented him by the Liberals in 1911. While many Conservatives felt that Laurier had pulled it off again when the broad reciprocal agreement was announced, Borden decided, after consultation with his colleagues, that the issue could and should be fought. Once again, as did John A in 1854, Borden joined forces with men of another Party to accomplish major national goals. The anti-reciprocity Liberals of 1911 were welcomed by Borden despite the advice of some of his own partisans who feared contamination from such unholy contacts.

After one of the most stirring election campaigns in our history the Conservatives won the 1911 election with 27 seats in Quebec and majorities in all provinces except Saskatchewan and Alberta. While some of the Quebec Conservatives were more opposed to Laurier's naval policy than to reciprocity, they were followers of Borden and attended Party caucuses. In forming his Cabinet Borden gave representation to Quebec elements which had not been long-time Conservatives. Had it not been for the disruptions over naval policy and conscription it is possible that Borden might have laid a new and broader base of Conservative strength in Quebec. The post of Finance Minister went to a Toronto man prominent among the anti-reciprocity Grits.

The Conservative Party under Borden had a long list of accomplishments. Reform of the Civil Service, railway reorganization, return of natural resources to the provinces, the inauguration of a highway building program (killed by a Liberal Senate), were but some of the government's attainments before the outbreak of war.

In that war Borden gave vigorous and splendid leadership. In its aftermath he showed his great skill in intra-empire and international affairs.

By the time he laid down the Prime-Ministership in 1920 this country was no longer a colony but an independent country recognized as such in the British Commonwealth and in the League of Nations where it was a charter member.

Borden was our first international statesman --- courageous, firm and determined that Canada have a voice in affairs beyond its borders. From the very beginning he told the British, "If you want our aid, call us to your councils."

If Macdonald was the Father of Confederation, Borden was the architect of our independence.

The moderation of Borden was effectively demonstrated in 1917 when in the throes of a bitter social and political cleavage he again joined hands with people not of his own party. In a desire to avoid excessive partisanship in reference to the conscription issue, Borden worked tirelessly to form a coalition government which would enact a conscription measure that would be above politics. He even offered Laurier the prerogative not only of naming his half of the Cabinet, but also of accepting or rejecting the personnel of the Conservative half of the Ministry. Laurier refused and Borden

had to make his coalition with Liberals prepared to desert their leader on this issue (among them was the man who later proclaimed himself Laurier's most faithful disciple, Mackenzie King!)

Borden's Union Government imposed conscription, convinced as they were that the military forces urgently needed reinforcements, obtained by compulsion if necessary. The Prime Minister was above all others a foe of bigotry or intolerance in any form, but he was convinced that the vast majority of Canadians would not tolerate a policy which avoided forcible conscription of desperately-needed manpower. Courageously and honestly he advised Quebec leaders of his convictions on this question. It is easy in the glow of after-vision to criticize Borden for his 1917 stand. Leading a fully-committed allied power in the grim days of the Great War did not allow for such detached objectivity.

The Union Government led the nation in a vigorous all-out war effort and presided over post-war reconstruction policies which were models for other nations and for Canada itself in the second war. But after the conflict ended, so did the full-fledged coalition and by 1920 the Liberal and Unionist Party had almost no Liberal participation as one after one the wartime allies drifted back to the Grit fold or out of public life altogether.

In the face of labor discontent and agrarian unrest which found political expression in the progressive movement, the Conservatives stood alone. All the ills of conscription were charged to them and particularly to their new and brilliant leader, Arthur Meighen. Forgotten conveniently was the fact that it was a measure enacted by a government in which 50% of the Cabinet was Liberal. The Meighen and Borden Governments were put in the dock for what in the cool shade of retrospect was described as repressive violence in the

settlement of the Winnipeg general strike of 1919. During the election campaign of 1921 it seemed to have slipped the public memory that the Dominion government at the time of the strike was not exclusively Conservative and that Ottawa acted on the urgent entreaties of the Liberal Government of Manitoba.

Arthur Meighen, doubtless the most brilliant Prime Minister of all time and certainly the most eloquent, was to prove one of the most luckless. Little time was given him between assuming office on July 10th, 1920 and the election of December 6th, 1921. In his brief hour of leadership, he, like Borden, made a major contribution to Commonwealth diplomacy when at a Prime Ministers' Conference he persuaded Britain to abrogate the Japanese alliance. This paved the way for the Washington Naval Conference of 1921 and the closer U.S.-British relations which followed that event.

But Meighen lost the 1921 election and the Conservative Party was pulverized in Quebec and on the Prairies. In the old province, Meighen was pictured by the Liberals as the blood-drenched author of the hideous conscription law. In the Prairies and rural Ontario, the Liberals shrewdly assisted the Progressives in defeating Conservative candidates. When the returns were in the Conservatives had 59 seats, the Liberals 117, and the Progressives 64.

Mackenzie King, one of the most devious and cunning men ever to enter Canadian politics, began his long tenure of office in 1921. The great expert at clouding issues and obscuring policies drew his strength from a discreditable whispering campaign against Meighen in Quebec and a working arrangement which with the Progressives ended in their absorption.

Meighen believed that political parties and the political process should seek to clarify issues for public choice. He thought it a good thing that the voters have a clear-cut set of policies to adjudicate, but obfuscation rather

than clarification won the day and the King brand of equivocation and double talk was firmly imposed on Canadian public life.

Meighen, a tireless campaigner and masterful orator, devoted all his powerful energy to restoring Conservative Party fortunes after 1921. A careful look at the voting statistics showed how well he did. (In every election Meighen fought, he increased his support with the Canadian public.) But he had enemies within as well as without, -- powerful forces in the Montreal business community opposed the man who was held responsible for setting up the C.N.R. Ontario Tories, more English than the King, swooped down upon him for his famed Hamilton speech. This was the occasion where he had pledged that no Canadian troops would ever again go overseas until a general election was held. (When war came, Meighen's formula was followed although the wily King held a plebiscite rather than a general election.)

Despite all that was going against him, Meighen and the Conservatives did win the 1925 election. They had 116 seats to 101 for King and 24 for the Progressives. But King refused to move over until his Progressive allies found the customs scandal too much for them. Then he sought to avoid a vote of censure in the House of Commons by requesting the Governor General to dissolve Parliament. The self-declared champion of Canadian independence even urged the Governor General to consult the British Colonial Secretary on the matter. When, quite properly, the Governor General refused to follow this unworthy suggestion or to grant a dissolution, Meighen accepted the call to form a government. It was short-lived. King's greater success in wooing the Progressives soon paid its final dividend and the Meighen Government was defeated on the floor of the House.

In the campaign which followed, the phoney "constitutional issue" obscured the real scandal and mismanagement of the King administration and the Liberals won 117 seats to the Tories' 91. The extent of the Grit devouring of Progressives was indicated by the fact that the once brave band of reformers elected only 13 members.

The setback of 1926 gave Meighen's Tory enemies their chance to oust him from the leadership. With despatch and undeterred by courtesy or gratitude, this they did. At the 1927 convention in Winnipeg (our first of many leadership national conventions) they chose R. B. Bennett, millionaire railway lawyer and Calgary tycoon. Bennett's fidelity to Meighen and to Borden had not been completely above reproach and there were some who doubted if he had the consultative disposition essential to a successful and popular party leader. But Bennett had money, ability and energy, but a big factor in favour of the opposition was the depression. The King Government faced the economic blizzard of 1929 with magnificent detachment and calm inaction. In a world gripped by economic disaster the 1930 Canadian Speech from the Throne expressed congratulations for the prosperity which Canadians enjoyed. (This in the very vale of the depression).

But not only the depression and his failure to cope with it worked against King. Almost incredibly he was the victim of one of his own rash and candid utterances (his last!) He had declared in the House of Commons that while provincial governments formed by third parties might get Ottawa help in combatting the widespread suffering of the unemployed, not a five cent piece would go to a Tory province.

The 1930 election campaign heard many references to this formula for national unity. It also heard Bennett vigorously, perhaps too vigorously,

promise the end of unemployment and the restoration of prosperity. On July 28th, 1930 the Conservatives elected 137 members and the Grits 88.

No Canadian leader ever faced a tougher task than Bennett. The world remained in the grip of a crippling depression, great financial institutions in other lands collapsed, political structures were overthrown and hideous ideologies won acceptance from impoverished and demoralized electorates. In Canada, thanks to Bennett's brilliant, if highhanded leadership, the economy remained sound, no banks failed, no runaway inflation swept the land. But despite vigorous efforts to combat unemployment and the other depression begetten ills, the nation (like others) remained in an economic slump.

In 1935 Bennett launched the most far-reaching program of social welfare in Canadian history. In five startling and eloquent radio addresses (their contents unknown to his cabinet ministers until they heard them on the radio!) he denounced the Liberals as the laissez-faire Party of inaction and called upon Canadians to support him as the leader of reform.

But Bennett's New Deal came too late. Had he launched it in 1931 or 1932 he might have become the Roosevelt of Canada. Instead he led the Party to a defeat, the like of which it had never suffered before. The election of 1935 saw the Conservative strength reduced to 39 while the Liberals elected 171 members.

The depression had done its work, it had elected Bennett, it also annihilated him. But despite his phenomenal ability and the outstanding merit of his government, the actions of Bennett himself contributed to the magnitude of his Party's disaster. His cabinet colleagues and other faithful Conservatives had been alienated by his overbearing manner. He haughtily rejected the opportunity of reconciliation with his former Trade and Commerce Minister, H.H. Stevens

and the latter went on to form the Reconstruction Party and capture the votes of hundreds of thousands of disillusioned Tories. In his Herculean efforts which the grim times demanded, Bennett neglected his role as Party leader, organization languished, and the shrewd King made gains on all fronts in the face of Conservative neglect and disunity.

But while Bennett is unlovable and failed to win the devotion which enveloped Macdonald, he merits unreserved admiration for his ability and the manner in which he attacked the massive problems of his day. Perhaps as Conservatives said at the time, he saved the country but wrecked the Party. Does he deserve ill repute for this? The great Meighen thought not:

"In our Dominion where sections abound a Dominion of races, of classes and of creed, of many languages and many origins, there are times when no Prime Minister can be true to his trust to the nation he has sworn to serve save at the temporary sacrifice of the Party he is appointed to lead."

To Bennett we owe gratitude for advancing the cause of Reform and Progress within our Party. Hidebound Tories who would have us return to some Goldwaterish pre-Family Compact never-never-land will find little for their scripts in Bennett's 1935 speeches.

The post-Bennett era is marked by a series of leadership conventions and lost elections. In 1938 the Party selected Robert Manion, a man as affable as Bennett was austere, a Roman Catholic with a French-Canadian wife. But the naive hopes that his wife and his religion would win us Quebec were dashed in the hastily-called 1940 election. "Fighting Bob" was smeared as a conscriptionist in Quebec. His call for a national government was repudiated by spokesmen of other parties. His appeal to the electorate fizzled out in the

face of King's campaign for a return of his government and a war effort without conscription. The party standing was 39 Conservatives (NG) to 184 Liberals.

Manion lost his own seat and very soon his post as Party leader.

In a generous gesture of Party loyalty, Meighen consented to return to the uneasy seat of Conservative leadership. He resigned from the Senate and contested a seemingly safe by-election. But with Liberal connivance, the CCF candidate defeated Canada's outstanding statesman and the great Meighen once again retired from the lists. In his place the Party chose Premier Bracken of Manitoba who had led a Progressive Government in Winnipeg for over two decades. With such a sure-fire winner could the Party lose. With the Prairies and Ontario on their side the Conservatives (Progressive Conservatives after 1942 in deference to their Progressive leader) thought success would be theirs.

But Bracken failed to galvanize the Canadian electorate (a closer look at Manitoba might have revealed that he was neither as popular nor as progressive as some convention delegates thought). He did lead the Party to a much better showing in the 1945 election where it won 67 seats, but King once more won the day (although his majority was paper-thin).

The next move was to replace Bracken. This time the Premier of Ontario was called upon to deliver the long-sought victory. George Drew, the only head of a Conservative Government in Canada had won a narrow victory in 1943 and swept to a triumph in 1945. He had roundly defeated the CCF, which in 1943 had secured almost as many seats as the Conservatives and in so doing may have saved the two-party system in Canada.

George Drew was a man of striking appearance, of outstanding courage, both in the field of battle and in public affairs. He was a man of vast knowledge, wide reading, of fine character. One would have thought that such

a man would have made a great and successful leader of a national party. But success did not come to Drew in Ottawa. His mastery of affairs in the House of Commons was unquestioned. He organized a fine opposition group - he vigorously opposed the government and frankly and fully discussed the great public issues of the day. But in the 1949 election the Conservatives lost seats, falling to 41 as against the Liberals' 190. This time the Conservatives did not call a new leadership convention, instead Drew redoubled his efforts to organize the Party, both in the House of Commons and throughout the country.

He found great difficulty in overcoming the tactics of the Liberal Party, which pictured him as a straight-laced, unbending, unfeeling high Tory from Toronto's Bay Street. On George Drew the Liberal Party's Madison Avenue type Ad men scored their greatest victory. Drew was presented as the man of privilege, the narrow-minded aristocrat, while the austere St. Laurent,^a wealthy corporation lawyer from Quebec was made to appear as an affable warm-hearted "Uncle Louis".

The denigration of Drew was successful for some time, and in 1953 the Conservatives were again defeated but in the parliamentary session of 1955, and especially 1956, the true greatness of George Drew and his Party came through, and at that stage the Conservatives may be said to have shaken off the dark curtain of despondency and near despair which had enveloped them for so many years after the blistering defeat administered to Bennett and the Party in 1935.

The Liberal Government led by St. Laurent, and economic fields in the custody of C.D. Howe, presided over a Canadian prosperity which reached unprecedented heights. But while the country was prosperous, political institu-

tions were being dangerously undermined. Mr. Howe, an arrogant unbending man, had grown so casual about such trivialities as parliamentary approval that his outspoken utterances had penetrated the usual apathy which the great bulk of Canadians have towards political matters. The 1955 session was marked by a fight against his determination to have emergency powers legislation granted him almost in perpetuity. The small but able and united Conservative parliamentary group fought him and the government to a standstill and they were successful in their fight for the rights of Parliament.

In the following session, however, the government embarked upon a course which brought about one of the most furious debates in the history of the Canadian House of Commons. In their determination to ram through the pipeline legislation, the government invoked closure with Mr. Howe manning the parliamentary guillotine.

Led by Drew, the Conservatives waged a fight which aroused, cheered and thrilled Canadians. There were many who believed that the Conservatives had not only found a cause to fight, but both the man and the manner of fighting it in the best traditions of the Party, Drew however was not to be given the opportunity of leading his Party back to office. In 1956 he resigned because of ill health and the Party chose as leader the eloquent and colorful John Diefenbaker, who had been the runner-up in the conventions of 1942 and 1948.

In the election of June 1957 the Conservatives elected 112 members to the Liberals' 105. Mr. St. Laurent, unlike his predecessor Mackenzie King, graciously withdrew from office, and the first Conservative Government in many years picked up the reins of power.

In the twenty-third Parliament the minority government put through more progressive legislation in a few weeks than any of its predecessors. Many

of the economic inequalities which the Liberals had neglected were corrected. We in the Atlantic region know how quickly the Conservative Government moved to redress the grave imbalances which had been allowed to become more and more acute in the 22 years of the King, St-Laurent Ministry. The Atlantic Provinces' adjustment grants, assistance to the Beechwood power project, the broad measure of aid to the provinces in grants, made for a better and sounder functioning of the various provincial economies. Old age pensions were increased, veterans' pensions and allowances were upped, progressive legislation was advanced to assist long neglected areas of the agricultural economy.

In 1958 Mr. Pearson led the Liberals to a stinging defeat as the Conservatives carried 208 of the 265 House of Commons constituencies. It was the greatest electoral victory in Canadian history. The record of the Conservative Government is well known to you as are the results of the 1962 election, when we suffered a staggering loss of seats as well as the 1963 contest, which resulted in the election of a minority Liberal Government.

It is just about as difficult to analyze the results of an election after it is over as it is to predict the outcome before it takes place. Why had our strong Party fallen in 1962? There are many reasons.

One of these, of course, is the fact that devaluation, a necessary and, as it soon proved, valuable step, came during the campaign and was misrepresented by the Liberals as the major sign of a faltering economy. Unemployment figures were high and our opponents never ceased to quote them for political advantage. Perhaps too, the vast majority of 58 was hurtful in 1962. Many electors believing that things were too one-sided may have thought they were exercising some restraining influence. In the end they didn't restrain, they almost defeated. Perhaps too, although this is shocking in a Party so

accustomed to reverses, there was a little over-confidence. I well recall the forecast of a man prominent in the councils of the Party who maintained that the Conservative total in 1962 would be 205 seats! I believe we failed to get our story across, for the Diefenbaker Government was a good government. By comparison with its successor, it was magnificent.

An important factor too was the tragic death of the Honourable Paul Sauvé, the brilliant, competent Premier of Quebec. Mr. Sauvé was leader of the Union Nationale Party in succession to the late Premier Duplessis. He was a consummate politician, a true son of Quebec and a Canadian who would likely have ushered in Quebec's social and political change without the disruptions which have been noticeable in the present day.

Under Sauvé the Ottawa-Quebec relations were vastly improved. With the election of Lesage in 1960 and of Robichaud in New Brunswick, Conservative support in those provinces began to fall away. There has always been a close correlation between provincial and federal strength, and in the Liberal capture of the two provinces, Quebec and New Brunswick, a great advance was made by that Party toward federal victory.

There are many factors which bear analysis and it is never wise to try and find excuses for electoral defeat, rather is it the course of wisdom to examine carefully any errors which may have been made. The handling of the Coyne affair, the decisions and divisions over nuclear weapons without question disturbed and finally alienated many Conservatives. The Party found itself in 1963 with serious areas of electoral weakness in important and populous parts of the country, but 1963 was a far cry from 1935, although there were some factors which bore striking similarities.

The division in the Cabinet preceding the election comes immediately to mind. But in 1963 Conservatives elected a large number of members. The Party held governments in four important provinces. The organization nationally remained relatively strong. The country discovered that the Pearson Government was as uncertain as the mandate which it had given it. A series of administrative blunders, an overall ineptitude in administration and indeed in political management diminished the effectiveness of the Liberals almost immediately after their election. The high power campaign with its gimmicks and its promise of sixty days of decision turned to ignominious disrepute when the new masters started to perform.

Today the Conservative Party faces, as it has faced before, serious issues, some of them so important as to involve the preservation of the Dominion which Macdonald had created. In a day of excessive provincialism the need for national leadership was never greater. For it is from the men in the national field that leadership must come. It is to Ottawa that Canadians look for direction in these difficult and trying times.

It is our responsibility to work together, to bring forward policies which will build a greater Canada which will preserve those things of value from the past, which will unite and not destroy. In the process we can find much benefit from the history of Conservatives of an earlier day. The same old values of moderation, tolerance, readiness to reform when reform is needed, vigorous intelligent nationalism, above all a fidelity to our unique monarchical parliamentary federal structure --- with such qualities we have a great deal to bring to our country. Let us give of our best to Canada's oldest and greatest Party.

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